

Remarks/Arguments:

This is a reply to the office action of August 13.

The drawings (Fig. 1) and specification have been amended to correct the duplication of reference numeral 24. Stray marks have been removed from Figs. 1 - 4.

The claims have been amended above to better distinguish the invention from the prior art. Claim 25 has been amended to include the limitations formerly contained in canceled claim 26. Minor editorial changes have been made in several other claims. Claims 49 - 52 are new. Claim dependencies have been changed as necessary.

The examiner is asked to reconsider the rejection, in view of the amendments above and the following comments.

At page 11 of the pending Office action, the Examiner held that it would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to use the teaching of US 4,701,849 (Elden) in view of Summers and Glen.

We understand that the operator and the client disclosed in Elden correspond to the operator and to the patient, respectively, of the present invention.

In the invention recited in claim 25, when the patient operates the handling means, the interpreting means display to the patient himself, before emitting it, a warning that can be interpreted by the operator.

In contrast, when the client of Elden handles the transmitting means, a visual indicator is instantly displayed on the central station for interpretation of the operator, perhaps somewhere hidden to the client (see column 3, lines 62-65: "the central station may be

located near the cashier's table or other location where the service personnel of the restaurant can see it frequently and conveniently”), and the audible annunciator is triggered only when the operator has taken an unduly long amount of time to respond to the client's request. The client is not given an opportunity to review the communication before it is sent, and once the communication is sent, an audible annunciation is delayed. Elden’s teachings would not have led a person of ordinary skill in the field of this invention from Summers and Glen to the invention now recited in claim 25.

In a preferred embodiment (claim 49), the request signal is pre-selected by and first displayed to the patient on a screen 22 and, after confirmation the patient, a sound signal is discharged for interpretation by the operator. Elden does not allow the customer to select from several possible requests, and therefore does not provide the customer an opportunity to review the request signal before it is sent. Claim 49 and the claims which depend from it are therefore deemed allowable even if claim 25 is not.

We believe the claims now presented are patentable over the prior art of record, and that this application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

/Charles Fallow/

Charles W. Fallow
Reg. No. 28,946

Shoemaker and Mattare, Ltd.
10 Post Office Road - Suite 100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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